

X.—*A Second Recent Shell of Helix Lowei, Férussac.*

By Canon A. M. NORMAN, M.A., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., &c.

1831. *Helix portosanctana*, β . *gigantea*, Lowe, Cambr. Phil. Soc. Trans. vol. iv. p. 46, pl. v. fig. 16.

1835. *Helix Lowei*, Férussac, Bull. de Zool. p. 89.

1854. *Helix Lowei*, Albers, Malacographia Maderensis, p. 82, pl. xvii. figs. 11, 12.

1878. *Helix Lowei*, Wollaston, Testacea Atlantica, p. 90.

Wollaston writes :—“ The *H. Lowei* (the larger examples of which measure upwards of 2 inches across the broadest part) stands pre-eminent amongst the Madeiran *Helices* for its gigantic stature.” But Wollaston need not have restricted his comparison to the shells of Madeira, for the only species in the whole Palæarctic region which equal or very slightly exceed *H. Lowei* in diameter are *Helix Codringtoni*, Gray, and *H. Pouzolzi*, Mich. ; but in total bulk *H. Schlestli*, Mouss., and *H. lucorum*, Linn., are unsurpassed.

This very fine species is abundant as a fossil in the calcareous beds of Porto Santo. It was long regarded as extinct ; but at length a living specimen was discovered by Signor J. M. Moniz, a collector of Mollusca in Madeira. Mr. J. Yate Johnson thus tells the tale :—“ One red-letter day an active naturalist, who was in the habit of prying into out-of-the-way corners, happened to turn over a heavy stone in the islet of Cima, off Porto Santo. Imagine, brother naturalists !—for you alone can—his mingled astonishment and delight when he saw secreted beneath it a living individual of *Helix Lowei* ! To compare small things with great, it was as if a traveller in the wilds of Africa were to discover a pterodactyle fluttering like a bat in the obscure depths of some previously unexplored cavern. The prize was conveyed to Funchal with the greatest care, and there it lived for some time, anxiously tended by its discoverer. Perhaps it was too much indulged in the good things of this world, for its life is supposed to have been shortened by a surfeit of cabbage (*Brassica oleracea*), a luxurious article of diet to which it had never been accustomed in its frugal home on a barren rock. It died *sine prole*, the last of its ancient race ; but its shell is fondly preserved by its still disconsolate owner” (J. Y. Johnson, ‘ Madeira, its Climate and Scenery,’ 1885, p. 211).

A second example, however, is now known. In 1892 Herr Rolle, the dealer in shells at Berlin, wrote to me offering certain shells, among them a *Helix Lowei*. In

ordering some of these I did not include the latter, since I had a sufficiency of the fossil specimens. The shells came, and a letter from Herr Rolle saying that he had also sent the *H. Lowei*, as he felt certain that I should like to have it. It may be imagined that my surprise was not unlike that of Signor Moniz when he raised the heavy stone, when, on opening the box, there lay before me a second recent specimen of this grand shell. Careful comparison with the fossils showed no differences except those produced by fossilization. The only information that Herr Rolle could give me respecting the specimen was that it came from the collection of Baron von Maltzan, recently deceased.

Wishing to have my own opinion ratified or otherwise by the highest authority, I sent the shell to Rev. R. Boog Watson, whose collection of, and knowledge with respect to, the Mollusca of Madeira is unequalled. He pronounced it to be a recent specimen of *Helix Lowei*. The question then arose whether it was Signor Moniz's specimen which had passed into the possession of Baron von Maltzan. A letter which Mr. Watson wrote to Mr. J. Y. Johnson, however, elicited the reply that the original specimen was still in the collection of Signor Moniz, and that neither he nor Mr. Johnson had ever heard of the capture of a second specimen. Lastly, when I went to Madeira last year I took my specimen with me, and Mr. Johnson entirely agreed that it was a recent shell of *H. Lowei*. When, and by whom, and in what exact locality it was found remains a mystery.

The specimen measures $1\frac{9}{10}$ inch (or 48 millim.) in diameter and $1\frac{2}{10}$ inch (or 30 millim.) high. The thinness of the shell for so large a *Helix* is remarkable, and it is translucent in every part; the weight is only 2 scruples. The colour on the under surface is pure white, on the upper the white is slightly tinged with brown; two very narrow rufous bands gird the body-whorl, the one just above, the other just below the periphery. In form and sculpture there is no difference whatever from those of the fossil shells.

Mr. Lowe, when he first described and figured this shell, suggested that the recent *Helix portosantana*, Lowe, of Madeira, might be specifically the same species as the extinct *H. Lowei*, its representative in a depauperated form. But the shells are perfectly distinct. *Helix portosantana* is not only very much smaller, the spire more depressed &c., but there are the following marked differences in sculpture:—In *H. Lowei*, both recent and fossil, the apical whorls are strongly and markedly pitted, and the underside of the shell exhibits not the slightest trace of punctation. These features are

exactly reversed in *Helix portosantana*. The apical whorls are devoid of all pitting or punctation, while the under surface is punctated all over, similar punctation being present also on the upperside of the later whorls, though not there so conspicuously developed as on the lower surface. In other words, *Helix Loweii* has large pittings or punctures at the apex, and nowhere else. *Helix portosantana* has no pittings or punctations on the apical whorls, but has them on the later whorls. This description relates to adult shells.

XI.—On Two undescribed Cicadas from the Transvaal.

By W. L. DISTANT.

Platypleura sylvia, sp. n.

Body pilose. Head and pronotum ochraceous; head with the face and front castaneous, the carinæ black, on face enclosing two ochraceous spots; a broad black fascia between the eyes, ocelli castaneous; pronotum with the lateral angles pale ochraceous, inwardly infuscated. Mesonotum castaneous, with four large black obconical spots on anterior margin, the outermost longest and curved; a black central lanceolate spot and a spot on each anterior branch of the cruciform elevation; lateral basal margin ochraceous. Abdomen above black, posterior segmental margins castaneous. Body beneath and legs ochraceous; coxæ and trochanters spotted with black.

Tegmina semiopaque and talc-like, slightly mottled with fuscous, venation castaneous, whole costal area ochraceous; wings pale hyaline, venation castaneous, about basal half semiopaque pale ochraceous where the venation is concolorous.

Opercula short, broad, considerably overlapping inwardly; rostrum not extending beyond posterior coxæ, its apex black; face with an acute central sulcation; pronotal lateral angles broadly amplified and subacutely angulated.

♂ ♀. Long. 32–33 millim.; exp. tegm. 90 millim.

Hab. Transvaal: Pretoria District (*Pret. Mus.*), Middelburg (*Kassner*), Zoutpansberg (*Kassner*), Lydenburg District (*Pret. Mus.* and *Coll. Dist.*).

This species is allied to *P. semiclara*, Germ., from which it differs by the much larger and more robust body, the more angulated pronotal margins, different colour and markings, and especially in the smaller ochraceous area of the wings.

P. sylvia seems, according to present knowledge, to be
Ann. & Mag. N. Hist. Ser. 7. Vol. iii. 6